

THE MARYLAND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES – OCTOBER 15, 2003

Chairman Tim Lambert called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m.

Approval for Minutes from August Meeting

- August 2003 Meeting minutes were approved without any changes.

Wildlife and Heritage Service Game Program

- Introductions made by Robert Beyer, Associate Director
 - 1) Steve Bittner, Game Mammals Section Leader
 - 2) Bob Long, Bird Project Leader
- Bob Long presented a Power Point presentation on bobwhite quail management in Maryland.
 - 1) The bobwhite quail population has been declining over the last 37 years from 1966-2001.
 - 2) Loss of habitat is a major reason for the decline of the quail population.
 - 3) There are several general habitat requirements for a healthy quail population.
 - (a) Early successional shrubland or grassland habitats with a diversity of grasses, forbs, shrubs, and food sources (native seeds and fruits, crops, and insects) are good habitat for quail.
 - (b) Weeds are also good habitat for quail.
 - 4) Mr. Bob Long pointed out that the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) dollars and the potential benefit to species such as turkey and quail.
 - 5) Mr. Long handed out a copy of the Bobwhite Quail Management in Maryland [Attachment A].
- Upland Game Bird Program is focusing on creating, enhancing, and restoring bobwhite quail habitat through a variety of methods, Private Lands, State-owned lands (WMA), Farm Bill Programs, and Education and Outreach.
 - 1) The quail management plan, in previous years, has suffered due to lack of funding and lack of personnel.
 - 2) The Upland Game Bird Program has three primary objectives:
 - (a) To develop a site for managers of private and public lands to see and synthesize management practices for quail and other early successional wildlife.
 - (b) To provide a site to experiment with new and varied management practices with capability of assessment.
 - (c) To provide a case study to demonstrate that quail and other early successional wildlife populations can be increased through habitat management and serve as positive reinforcement for land managers contemplating this type of management.
- Questions and Answers:
 - 1) Commissioner Adams asked if State Wildlife Grants (SWG) could be used to increase quail habitat. The Natural Heritage Program is working on a Conservation Management Plan, which will identify species in need of conservation.
 - 2) Commissioner King asked what is the minimum acreage required for coveys. The minimum acreage for coveys is 4 to 5 acres, yet any habitat that a farmer wants to donate will be acceptable.
 - 3) Commissioner Lamp asked what the Maryland Farm Bureau (MFB) could do to help assist DNR to succeed in their 3-year management plan. The farmers are aware of the incentives. In the end, farmers have to make the decision as to take their lands out of production or keep their lands in production.
- Nuisance Wildlife Working Group
 - 1) Mr. Steve Bittner handed out "Nuisance Wildlife" [Attachment B].
 - 2) Mr. Bittner has been working with several wildlife control cooperators to review the exiting wildlife regulations.
 - 3) The Nuisance Wildlife Working Group (NWWG) will provide the Department with recommendations.
 - 4) NWWG met the first time in June and drafted changes to the current regulations.
 - 5) Mr. Bittner outlined numerous changes to the regulations from Attachment B.

Wild Turkey Advisory Committee Report

- Presentation by Chairman James Gilford and Bob Long, Bird Project Leader
 - 1) The Wild Turkey Advisory Committee has ten members from all parts of the State. The committee is charged with the responsibility to provide the State with recommendations.
 - 2) The Wild Turkey Advisory Committee met in the spring when Mr. Bob Long joined the Department. The committee is concern about the tremendous amount of workload that WHS has.
 - 3) The turkey population has been successful in some areas, but there are areas where there is a need for an increase in the wild turkey population.
 - (a) The 2003 spring was not a good season for the turkey population, due to a poor reproduction year. The cold weather in May, June, and July is a contributing factor for the low reproduction numbers for this year; therefore, the population will be low for the 2003 Fall Season and 2004 Spring Season.
 - (b) There are areas where the Department would like to release some turkeys and this will happen this year and next year.

- 4) The committee published a brochure for educating the public on wild turkey population; this document was in production for about two years.
- 5) Mr. Bob Long is in the process of trying to get the new Wild Turkey Guidelines approved.
- Question and Answer
 - 1) Commissioner Dollar asked if the turkey population is at a restored or healthy status. The turkey population is doing well. There is a concern for loss of habitat and lack of funding.

Urban Wildlife Subcommittee

- Commissioner Lamp handed out October 15, 2003 Proposed Establishment of a WAC Subcommittee on Urban Wildlife Issues [Attachment C].
 - 1) Commissioner Dollar briefly mentioned his concerns; Commissioner Dollar will e-mail Chairman Lambert this information.
 - 2) Commissioner Lamp will email Attachment C to Commissioners.
 - 3) Director Peditto added that the Commissioners routinely see the Department review technical questions, and work with communities to address urban wildlife issues.
 - 4) The Commissioners discussed the concepts of the Urban Wildlife Subcommittee.
 - 5) Commissioners agreed to accept Commissioner Adams changes except the last change on page two.

State Forest and Park Service Update

- 1) No Report

Natural Resources Police Update

- Presentation by Sergeant Ingerson
- NRP Activities, August 18, 2003 through October 13, 2003 [Attachment D]
 - 1) Sergeant Ingerson outlined few of the incidents recorded in [Attachment D].

MSA Update

- Chairman Lambert removed the MSA Update from the agenda. If the MSA would like to submit information, the Commissioners will add items to the New Business.

Maryland Farm Bureau Report

- Ms. Valerie Connelly introduced Mr. Kurt Fuchs as the staff member that will be attending the WAC meetings and bring the MFB Updates to the Commissioners.
 - 1) MFB have been receiving several calls on crop damage due to deer, geese, and other wildlife species. Also, the Farm Bureau have been receiving higher dollar value claims for disbursement to farmers on nursery crops, scrubs, and etc. that cost the farmers more money.
 - 2) The Maryland Farm Bureau Convention will be held from December 7th- 10th. Director Paul A. Peditto agreed to speak at this Convention. DNR will have a booth set up to interact with the farmers. This will assist Maryland Farm Bureau as to what policies to pursue and help them better understand current DNR strategies. The report will be available after the convention.

Old Business

- The 10-Year Bear Management Plan will be available to the public soon. At that time, the Department will accept public comments.

New Business

- Governor appointed new members to this Commission.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:05 a.m.

Attendance

Members:	L. Adams, C. Dollar, G. Fratz, W. Freeland, M. King, T. Lambert, J. Lamp
Guests:	V. Connelly, K. Fuchs, J. Gilford
Staff:	S. Bittner, B. Beyer, K. Blizzard, L. Ingerson, B. King, B. Long, P. Peditto, T. Spencer
Absent:	R. Gregory, C. Garner, K. Jones